



# COMMANDER NAVY REGION HAWAII

## SAFETY NEWSLETTER

### JULY 2005



#### Office Phone Numbers

For duty hours, 0700-1530  
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#### Web Sites:

<https://intranet.pearlharbor.navy.mil>  
[www.hawaii.navy.mil/Safety/Safety\\_Main.htm](http://www.hawaii.navy.mil/Safety/Safety_Main.htm)

#### Fourth of July Holiday...An American Tradition

*Can Also Be A Painful Memory!*



Φιρεωροκσ were associated with Independence Day celebrations a year after the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The discovery of gunpowder and the invention of the first fireworks are traditionally credited to the Chinese, although India is also a likely source. The sound of these first firecrackers, which appeared about 1,000 years ago, was so loud that the Chinese were convinced that the noise would scare away evil spirits. Since then, any event, a birth, death, wedding, coronation, or New year's celebration has become a fitting occasion for noisemakers.

The earliest settlers brought their enthusiasm for fireworks to this country. Firing of black powder was used to celebrate holidays. This fascination with the noise and color of fireworks continues today. By the American Revolution, fireworks had long played a part in celebrating important events. It was natural that not only John Adams, but also many of his countrymen should think of fireworks when independence was declared. In 1789, George Washington's inauguration was also accompanied by a fireworks display.  
*Source: Washington State Patrol*

#### Fireworks Safety

Fireworks can turn a joyful celebration into a painful memory when children and adults are injured while using fireworks. All fireworks are hazardous and can cause injury. Fireworks are classified as hazardous substances under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act. Some fireworks such as illegal firecracker type devices (M-80s, quarter sticks) and professional display fireworks should never be used or handled by consumers or children due to serious injuries and death that can and do occur from such use of handling.

Here are some examples of injuries from legal and illegal fireworks:

- A 33-year old man was setting off mortar style fireworks out of a black plastic pipe while in his backyard. As he leaned over one of the tubes and lit the fuse, the fireworks immediately went off striking him in the face. He was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead from head injuries.
- A 15-year old male tied together the wires of 10 sparklers. The sparklers ignited quickly and burned down very fast, finally exploding in his hand. The victim sustained a five-inch long laceration to his hand and forearm exposing muscle. Also, debris from the explosion lodged in his hand and arm. The victim had plastic surgery and has recovered.
- A 6-inch fountain that shot colored fireballs injured a 4-year old girl. When the fountain tipped over, the victim was struck in the chest by a fireball. She sustained 2nd and 3rd degree burns to her chest and neck. She was hospitalized for three weeks for burn treatment and skin grafts.

*Source: AboutPediatrics.com*



#### Eye Safety

Prevent Blindness America warns that there is no safe way for nonprofessionals to use

fireworks. It is only safe to enjoy the splendor and excitement of fireworks at a professional display. Believe it or not, bystanders are injured more often than the people who fire off the fireworks. Fireworks statistics show:

- Sparklers, firecrackers, bottle rockets and roman candles each contributed to 17% of eye injuries.
- Almost half (49%) of the injuries were to children under age 15.
- Sparklers can heat up to 1800 degrees Fahrenheit; hot enough to melt gold.
- There were an estimated 1,200 eye injuries, the second most commonly injured body part.

If an accident does occur, what can you do right away to minimize the damage to the eye? These six steps can help save someone's sight.

- **Do not rub the eye.** Rubbing the eye may increase bleeding or make the injury worse.
- **Do not attempt to rinse out the eye.** This can be even more damaging than rubbing.
- **Do not apply pressure to the eye itself.** Holding or taping a foam cup or the bottom of a juice carton to the eye is just two tips. Protecting the eye from further contact with any item, including the victim's hand is the goal.
- **Do not stop for medicine!** Over the counter pain relievers will not do much to relieve pain. Aspirin (should never be given to children) and ibuprofen can thin the blood increasing bleeding. **Take the victim to the emergency room at once.** This is more important than stopping for a pain reliever.
- **Do not apply ointment.** Ointment, which may not be sterile, makes the area around the eye slippery and harder for the doctor to examine.  
*Source: PreventBlindness.org*

**Do You Know Your Firework Safety? Take the test below and find out.**

1. Fireworks injuries can only occur during the Fourth of July.  
**True/False?**
2. Sparklers are safe fireworks and can be given to children.  
**True/False?**
3. Gunpowder is a major ingredient in most types of fireworks.  
**True/False?**
4. Only people who are careless or unsupervised are injured from fireworks. **True/False?**
5. Only people who set off fireworks risk injuries.  
**True/False?**
6. Males are more likely to get hurt from fireworks.  
**True/False?**

7. Bottle rockets are not dangerous because they're just firecrackers tied to a stick. **True/False?**

8. Homemade fireworks are safer than store bought fireworks.  
**True/False?**

9. Using fireworks is an inexpensive way to celebrate the Fourth of July. **True/False?**

10. My state bans fireworks. **True/False?**

**Answers to "Do You Know Your Fireworks Safety?"**

1. **FALSE.** While most fireworks injuries do occur during the July 4th holiday, many injuries also happen during Labor Day, New Years Eve, Christmas, and Mardi gras.

2. **FALSE.** Sparklers are the second highest cause of fireworks injuries that require hospitalization. Most of these injuries occur among preschool-age children. Sparklers are dangerous because they burn at a temperature hot enough to melt gold (1,800 degrees F!).

3. **TRUE.** Most fireworks contain gunpowder, which cause these devices to explode. Class C fireworks (e.g., firecrackers) are legal in many states and contain up to 50 mg. of gunpowder. Anything higher and the fireworks may be compared to an explosive bomb.

4. **FALSE.** Because fireworks are unpredictable, injuries can occur even if the person is careful or under supervision. The best way to avoid injury is not to use fireworks.

5. **FALSE.** When it comes to fireworks, no one is safe! Prevent blindness estimates that nearly 40 percent of fireworks injuries are to bystanders.

6. **TRUE.** Men and boys are the most frequent users of fireworks. That's why four out of every five fireworks injuries happen to males. Men between the ages of 22-44 and boys ages 12-14 are the most common victims.

7. **FALSE.** Bottle rockets are among the most dangerous fireworks available today. They account for the majority of all fireworks injuries that lead to permanent eye damage. Bottle rockets can move as fast as 200 miles per hour, explode in mid air, and fly in any direction.

8. **FALSE.** Homemade fireworks are often more hazardous. Those who make their own fireworks tend to combine the chemicals from other devices to create a bigger and more dangerous explosion.

9. **FALSE.** The cost of treating a fireworks injury far outweighs the cost of a single fireworks package, which is \$2.00. The average hospital emergency room charges approximately \$80 for one visit. This price does not include the cost families must pay for possible permanent injury, physical therapy, or blindness.

10. **FALSE** and **FALSE.** The answer depends on where you live. Only 11 states ban all types of fireworks; six states allow sparklers and/or snakes; 29 including the District of Columbia allow class C fireworks; and two have no fireworks laws at all. Fireworks are allowed in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

*Source: USACityLink.com*